

## General Assembly

Substitute Bill No. 696

February Session, 2008

\*\_\_\_\_\_SB00696APP\_\_\_041808\_\_\_\_\_\*

## AN ACT CONCERNING THE COURTS OF PROBATE.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- Section 1. Section 45a-107 of the general statutes is repealed and the
- 2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2008*):
- 3 (a) The basic costs for all proceedings in the settlement of the estate 4 of any deceased person, including succession and estate tax 5 proceedings, shall be in accordance with the provisions of this section.
- 6 (b) For estates in which proceedings were commenced on or after 7 [April 1, 1998] July 1, 2008, costs shall be computed as follows:
- 8 (1) The basis for costs shall be (A) the greatest of (i) the gross estate 9 for succession tax purposes, as provided in section 12-349, (ii) the 10 inventory, including all supplements thereto, (iii) the Connecticut 11 taxable estate, as defined in section 12-391, or (iv) the gross estate for 12 estate tax purposes, as provided in chapters 217 and 218, [whichever is 13 greater] except as provided in subdivisions (4) to (6), inclusive, of this 14 subsection, plus (B) all damages recovered for injuries resulting in 15 death, minus any hospital and medical expenses for treatment of such 16 injuries resulting in death minus any hospital and medical expenses 17 for treatment of such injuries that are not reimbursable by medical 18 insurance, and minus the attorney's fees and other costs and expenses 19 of recovering such damages. Any portion of the basis for costs that is

- 20 determined by property passing to the surviving spouse shall be
- 21 reduced by fifty per cent. Except as provided in subdivision (3) of this
- subsection, in no case shall the minimum cost be less than twenty-five
- 23 dollars.
- 24 (2) Except as provided in subdivisions (3) [and (4)] to (6), inclusive, 25 of this subsection, costs shall be assessed in accordance with the 26 following table:

T1	<b>Basis for Computation</b>	
T2	Of Costs	Total Cost
T3	0 to \$500	\$25
T4	\$501 to \$1,000	\$50
T5	\$1,000 to \$10,000	\$50, plus 1% of all
T6		in excess of \$1,000
T7	\$10,000 to \$500,000	\$150, plus .35% of all
T8		in excess of \$10,000
T9	\$500,000 to \$4,754,000	\$1,865, plus .25% of all
T10		in excess of \$500,000
T11	\$4,754,000 and over	\$12,500

- (3) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection, if the basis for costs is less than ten thousand dollars and a full estate is opened, the minimum cost shall be one hundred fifty dollars.
- (4) [In estates where the gross taxable estate is less than six hundred thousand dollars, in which no succession tax return is required to be filed, a probate fee of .1 per cent shall be charged against non-solely-owned real estate, in addition to any other fees computed under this section.] In the case of a deceased person who was domiciled in this state at the date of his or her death, the gross estate for estate tax purposes shall, for the purpose of determining the basis for costs pursuant to subdivision (1) of this subsection, be reduced by the fair market value of any real property or tangible personal property of the deceased person situated outside of this state, and the amount of any

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- indebtedness secured by a mortgage or lien on real property situated in this state.
- 43 (5) In the case of a deceased person who was not domiciled in this 44 state at the date of his or her death but who owned real property or 45 tangible personal property situated in this state at the date of his or her death, for the purpose of determining the basis for costs pursuant to 46 47 subdivision (1) of this subsection, only the fair market value of such 48 real property or tangible personal property situated in this state shall 49 be included in the gross estate for estate tax purposes. The value of any such real property situated in this state shall be reduced by the amount 50 51 of any indebtedness secured by a mortgage or lien on such real 52 property.
- 53 (6) The gross estate for estate tax purposes shall not, for the purpose 54 of determining the basis for costs pursuant to subdivision (1) of this 55 subsection, include any life insurance proceeds.
- 56 (c) For estates in which proceedings were commenced on or after
  57 April 1, 1998, and prior to July 1, 2008, costs shall be computed as
  58 follows:
- 59 (1) The basis for costs shall be (A) the greatest of (i) the gross estate for succession tax purposes, as provided in section 12-349, (ii) the 60 61 inventory, including all supplements thereto, (iii) the Connecticut 62 taxable estate, as defined in section 12-391, or (iv) the gross estate for 63 estate tax purposes, as provided in chapters 217 and 218, plus (B) all 64 damages recovered for injuries resulting in death, minus any hospital 65 and medical expenses for treatment of such injuries resulting in death, 66 minus any hospital and medical expenses for treatment of such injuries that are not reimbursable by medical insurance, and minus the 67 68 attorney's fees and other costs and expenses of recovering such damages. Any portion of the basis for costs that is determined by 69 70 property passing to the surviving spouse shall be reduced by fifty per cent. Except as provided in subdivision (3) of this subsection, in no 71 72 case shall the minimum cost be less than twenty-five dollars.

73 (2) Except as provided in subdivisions (3) and (4) of this subsection, 74 costs shall be assessed in accordance with the following table:

T12	<b>Basis for Computation</b>	
T13	Of Costs	<u>Total Cost</u>
T14	<u>0 to \$500</u>	<u>\$25</u>
T15	\$501 to \$1,000	<u>\$50</u>
T16	\$1,000 to \$10,000	\$50, plus 1% of all
T17		in excess of \$1,000
T18	\$10,000 to \$500,000	\$150, plus .35% of all
T19		<u>in excess of \$10,000</u>
T20	\$500,000 to \$4,754,000	\$1,865, plus .25% of all
T21		in excess of \$500,000
T22	\$4,754,000 and over	<u>\$12,500</u>

- 75 (3) Notwithstanding the provisions of subdivision (1) of this subsection, if the basis for costs is less than ten thousand dollars and a full estate is opened, the minimum cost shall be one hundred fifty dollars.
- (4) In estates where the gross taxable estate is less than six hundred thousand dollars, in which no succession tax return is required to be filed, a probate fee of .1 per cent shall be charged against nonsolely-owned real estate, in addition to any other fees computed under this section.
- [(c)] (d) For estates in which proceedings were commenced on or after July 1, 1993, and prior to April 1, 1998, costs shall be computed as follows:
  - (1) The basis for costs shall be: (A) The gross estate for succession tax purposes, as provided in section 12-349, or the inventory, including all supplements thereto, whichever is greater, plus (B) all damages recovered for injuries resulting in death minus any hospital and medical expenses for treatment of such injuries that are not reimbursable by medical insurance and minus the attorney's fees and

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- other costs and expenses of recovering such damages. Any portion of the basis for costs that is determined by property passing to the surviving spouse shall be reduced by fifty per cent. Except as provided in subdivision (3) of this subsection, in no case shall the minimum cost be less than ten dollars.
- 98 (2) Except as provided in subdivision (3) of this subsection, costs 99 shall be assessed in accordance with the following table:

T23	<b>Basis for Computation</b>	
T24	Of Costs	Total Cost
T25	0 to \$1,000	\$10.00
T26	\$1,000 to \$10,000	\$10, plus 1% of all
T27		in excess of \$1,000
T28	\$10,000 to \$500,000	\$100, plus .30% of all
T29		in excess of \$10,000
T30	\$500,000 to \$4,715,000	\$1,570, plus .20% of all
T31		in excess of \$500,000
T32	\$4,715,000 and over	\$10,000

- 100 (3) If the basis for costs is less than ten thousand dollars and a full estate is opened, the minimum cost shall be one hundred dollars.
  - [(d)] (e) For estates in which proceedings were commenced on or after July 1, 1983, and prior to July 1, 1993, costs shall be computed as follows:
  - (1) The basis for costs shall be: (A) The gross estate for succession tax purposes, as provided in section 12-349, minus one-third of the first fifty thousand dollars of any part of the gross estate for succession tax purposes that passes other than by will or under the laws of intestacy, plus (B) all damages recovered for injuries resulting in death minus any hospital and medical expenses for treatment of such injuries that are not reimbursable by medical insurance and minus the attorney's fees and other costs and expenses of recovering such damages.

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113	(2) Costs shall be assessed in accordance with the following table:					
T33	Basis for Computation					
T34	Of Costs	Total Cost				
T35	0 to \$1,000	\$10.00				
T36	\$1,000 to \$10,000	\$10, plus 1% of all				
T37		in excess of \$1,000				
T38	\$10,000 to \$100,000	\$100, plus .30% of all				
T39		in excess of \$10,000				
T40	\$100,000 to \$200,000	\$370, plus .25% of all				
T41		in excess of \$100,000				
T42	\$200,000 to \$500,000	\$620, plus .2% of all				
T43		in excess of \$200,000				
T44	\$500,000 to \$1,000,000	\$1,220, plus .15% of all				
T45		in excess of \$500,000				
T46	\$1,000,000 to \$5,000,000	\$1,970, plus .125% of all				
T47	<b>4</b>	in excess of \$1,000,000				
T48	\$5,000,000 and over	\$6,970, plus .1% of all				
T49		in excess of \$5,000,000				
114 115	[(e)] (f) For estates in which proceed July 1, 1983, costs shall be computed as	•				
T50	With respect to any estate	Costs computed under:				
T51	in which any proceedings	•				
T52	were commenced or					
T53	succession tax documents filed:					
T54	Prior to January 1, 1968	Section 45-17 of the				
T55	·	1961 supplement to				
T56		the general statutes				
T57	Prior to July 1, 1969, but	Section 45-17a of the				
T58	on or after January 1, 1968	1967 supplement to				
T59	·	the general statutes				
T60	Prior to July 1, 1978, but	Section 45-17a of the				
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T61 T62	on or after July 1, 1969	1969 supplement to the general statutes
T63	Prior to July 1, 1983, but	Section 45-17a of the
T64	on or after July 1, 1978	general statutes,
T65		revised to
T66		January 1, 1983

- [(f)] (g) If more than one hearing is held in any matter under this section, an additional charge of twenty-five dollars shall be payable to the court by the estate, or, in the discretion of the court, by any interested party against whom the court shall assess such additional charge.
- [(g)] (h) If the total time of any one hearing in the matter exceeds one hour, an additional charge of twenty-five dollars per hour for each hour in excess of the first hour shall be payable to the court by the estate, or at the discretion of the court by any interested party against whom the court shall assess the additional charge, provided the additional charge shall not exceed three hundred dollars.
- [(h)] (i) A charge of fifty dollars shall be payable to the court by any creditor applying to the Court of Probate pursuant to section 45a-364 or 45a-401 for consideration of a claim. If such claim is allowed by the court, the court may order the fiduciary to reimburse the charge from the estate.
- [(i)] (j) A charge of fifty dollars for an appeal shall be payable to the court by the appellant.
- [(j)] (k) A charge of fifty dollars plus the actual costs of rescheduling the adjourned hearing shall be payable to the court by any party who requests an adjournment of a scheduled hearing or whose failure to appear necessitates an adjournment, provided the court may waive the charge and costs for cause shown.
- [(k)] (1) In no event shall any fee exceed ten thousand dollars for any

- 140 estate in which proceedings were commenced prior to April 1, 1998,
- 141 and twelve thousand five hundred dollars for any estate in which
- proceedings were commenced on or after April 1, 1998.
- Sec. 2. Section 45a-36a of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2008*):
- 145 (a) Any judge of probate in office on or after October 1, 1997, whose 146 probate district is merged with another district, and who has not been 147 elected to a term which begins at the time of, or subsequent to, such 148 [consolidation] merger, (1) may elect to receive four years of credited 149 service, as defined in subdivision (2) of section 45a-34, (2) may elect to receive a reduction of [his] the judge's retirement age of not more than 150 151 four years pursuant to subsection (a) of section 45a-36, or (3) may elect 152 any combination [of] <u>under</u> subdivisions (1) and (2) of this [section] 153 subsection, provided such combination shall not exceed four years in 154 total. A judge of probate may elect to receive retirement benefits under 155 this section at any time once the judge becomes eligible to retire and 156 receive retirement benefits. A judge of probate subject to this 157 subsection shall not be disqualified from receiving benefits under this 158 subsection due to such judge's employment, subsequent to such 159 merger, in a probate court in a capacity other than as a probate judge.
  - (b) Any clerk of a probate court employed on or after October 1, 2008, whose probate court is merged with another district, and who has not been rehired by another probate court after such merger, (1) may elect to receive four years of credited service, as defined in subdivision (2) of section 45a-34, (2) may elect to receive a reduction of the clerk's retirement age of not more than four years pursuant to subsection (a) of section 45a-36, or (3) may elect any combination under subdivisions (1) and (2) of this subsection, provided such combination shall not exceed four years in total.
- Sec. 3. Section 45a-77 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2008*):

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- (a) The Probate Court Administrator may attend to any matters that the Probate Court Administrator considers necessary for the efficient operation of the courts of probate and for the expeditious dispatch and proper conduct of the business of such courts. The Probate Court Administrator shall administer and enforce the provisions of this chapter and the regulations issued under this section, and shall ensure performance of the duties of judges of probate and clerks of the courts of probate in accordance with the provisions of this chapter and such The Probate Court Administrator regulations. may recommendations to the General Assembly for legislation for the improvement of the administration of the courts of probate.
- (b) (1) The Probate Court Administrator may issue and shall enforce regulations, provided such regulations are approved in accordance with subsection (c) of this section. Such regulations shall be binding on all courts of probate and shall concern the following matters for the administration of the probate court system: (A) Auditing, accounting, statistical, billing, recording, filing and other court procedures; (B) reassignment and transfer of cases; (C) training of court personnel and continuing education programs for judges of probate and court personnel; and (D) the enforcement of the provisions of this chapter and the regulations issued pursuant to this section, including, but not limited to, recovery of expenses associated with any such enforcement, as permitted by such regulations.
- (2) The Probate Court Administrator may adopt regulations, in accordance with chapter 54, provided such regulations are approved in accordance with <u>subdivision (1) of</u> subsection (c) of this section. Such regulations shall be binding on all courts of probate and shall concern: (A) The availability of judges; (B) court facilities, personnel and records; (C) hours of court operation; and (D) telephone service.
- (c) (1) Either the Probate Court Administrator or the executive committee of the Connecticut Probate Assembly may propose regulations authorized under subsection (b) of this section. Any regulation proposed by the Probate Court Administrator shall be

submitted to the executive committee of the Connecticut Probate Assembly for approval. Any regulation proposed by the executive committee of the Connecticut Probate Assembly shall be submitted to the Probate Court Administrator for approval. If either the Probate Court Administrator or the executive committee of the Connecticut Probate Assembly fails to approve a proposed regulation, such proposed regulation may be submitted to a panel of three Superior Court judges appointed by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The panel of judges, after consideration of the positions of the Probate Court Administrator and the executive committee of the Connecticut Probate Assembly, shall either approve the proposed regulation or reject the proposed regulation.

- (2) Any proposed new regulation and any change in an existing regulation issued under this section on or after July 1, 2007, shall be submitted to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to the judiciary for approval or disapproval in its entirety, provided, if more than one proposed new regulation or change in an existing regulation is submitted at the same time, said committee shall approve or disapprove all such proposed new regulations and changes in existing regulations together in their entirety. Unless disapproved by said committee within ninety days of the date of such submittal, each such regulation shall become effective on the date specified in such regulation, but not in any event until ninety days after promulgation.
- (d) The Probate Court Administrator shall regularly review the auditing, accounting, statistical, billing, recording, filing, administrative and other procedures of the courts of probate.
- (e) The Probate Court Administrator shall, personally, or by an authorized designee of the Probate Court Administrator who has been admitted to the practice of law in this state for at least five years, visit each court of probate at least once during each two-year period to examine the records and files of such court in the presence of the judge of the court or the judge's authorized designee. The Probate Court

- 238 Administrator shall make any additional inquiries that the Probate 239 Court Administrator considers appropriate to ascertain whether the 240 business of the court, including the charging of costs and payments to 241 the State Treasurer, has been conducted in accordance with law, rules 242 of the courts of probate, regulations issued under this section and the 243 canons of judicial ethics, and to obtain information concerning the 244 business of the courts of probate which is necessary for the Probate 245 Court Administrator to perform properly the duties of the office.
- Sec. 4. Subsection (c) of section 45a-92 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2008*):
- 249 (c) Each judge of probate or personal representative, except a judge 250 of probate who is the Probate Court Administrator, shall at the time of 251 filing such returns pay to the State Treasurer to be credited to the fund 252 established by section 45a-82, a percentage of the annual net income 253 from such office based on the following table in which the percentage 254 appearing in the left column shall first be multiplied by the minimum 255 annual compensation of a high volume court as provided in subsection 256 (k) of this section, as in effect on the first day of July of the calendar 257 year for which an assessment is due pursuant to this section, the 258 product of which shall then be multiplied by the applicable percentage 259 appearing in the right column:

TC / T	T' 1 200/		. 1			1 1
T67	First 70%	Ot 1	tne	com	nensation	assessment rate
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T68	of a high volume court	\$1 nominal
T69	Next 6.67%	5%
T70	Next 6.66%	10%
T71	Next 6.67%	15%
T72	Next 6.67%	25%
T73	Next 6.66%	35%
T74	Next 13.34%	50%
T75	Next 33.33%	75%
T76	Next 33.67%	80%
T77	Next 66.67%	85%

T78 Next 133.33% 95%

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T80 Excess over 333.67%, up to the maximum amount computed at 97.5%

T81 by the Probate Court Administrator.

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T83 All over the maximum amount computed at 100% by the Probate

T84 Court Administrator.

As used in this subsection, "maximum amount" means the amount of annual net income from such office which, when applying the percentage payments set forth above, shall result in the judge of probate retaining as net compensation, after the payment of the above amounts, no more than the product resulting from the multiplication of seventy-two dollars by the annual weighted-workload of the court, as defined in regulations issued by the Probate Court Administrator pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 45a-77 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes, as amended by this act, but not to exceed the compensation of a high volume court as set forth in subsection (k) of this section, provided this limitation shall not apply to those courts described in subsection (k) of this section. Such payment shall be deemed to be a necessary expense of such office, but shall not be deductible from the gross income for the purpose of determining net income of such office under this section. Notwithstanding the provisions of this subsection, the annual minimum compensation of a judge of probate shall be no less than the product resulting from the multiplication of fifteen dollars by the annual weighted-workload of the court, as defined in regulations issued by the Probate Court Administrator pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b) of section 45a-77 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes, as amended by this act, or no less than the judge's average compensation for the threeyear period from January 1, 1996, to December 31, 1998, provided there was no break in the judge's service after such three-year period, but, in no event shall that minimum compensation exceed that provided pursuant to subsection (k) of this section.

- Sec. 5. Subsection (g) of section 5-259 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2009*):
- 289 (g) (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, [the] prior to July 1, 2009: (A) The Probate Court 290 291 Administration Fund established [in accordance with] <u>under</u> section 292 45a-82 [,] shall pay for each probate judge and Probate Court employee 293 not more than one hundred per cent of the portion of the premium 294 charged for his or her individual coverage and not more than fifty per 295 cent of any additional cost for his or her form of coverage, [. The] and 296 (B) the remainder of the premium for such coverage shall be paid by 297 the probate judge or Probate Court employee to the State Treasurer. Payment shall be credited by the State Treasurer to the fund 298 299 established [by] <u>under</u> section 45a-82. The total premiums payable 300 shall be remitted by the Probate Court Administrator directly to the 301 insurance company or companies or nonprofit organization or 302 organizations providing the coverage. On and after July 1, 2009, such 303 coverage shall be paid from funds appropriated by the General 304 Assembly and shall be provided to each probate judge and Probate 305 Court employee.
  - (2) The Probate Court Administrator shall issue regulations governing group hospitalization and medical and surgical insurance [pursuant to subdivision (1) of subsection (b)] in accordance with subsection (c) of section 45a-77 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes, as amended by this act.
- Sec. 6. Subsection (b) of section 45a-186 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):
  - (b) Each person who files an appeal pursuant to this section shall [serve] <u>mail</u> a copy of the complaint [on] <u>to</u> the court of probate that rendered the order, denial or decree appealed from and <u>serve a copy of the complaint</u> on each interested party. The failure of any person to

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- 318 make such service shall not deprive the Superior Court of jurisdiction 319 over the appeal. Notwithstanding the provisions of section 52-50, 320 service of the copy of the complaint shall be by state marshal, constable 321 or an indifferent person. Service shall be in hand or by leaving a copy 322 at the court of probate that rendered the order being appealed, or by 323 leaving a copy at the place of residence of the interested party being 324 served or at the address for the interested party on file with said court 325 of probate, except that service on a respondent or conserved person in 326 an appeal from an action under part IV of chapter 802h shall be in 327 hand by a state marshal, constable or an indifferent person.
- Sec. 7. Subsection (b) of section 45a-650 of the 2008 supplement to the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):
- 331 (b) The rules of evidence in civil [actions adopted by the judges of 332 the Superior Court] <u>cases in this state</u> shall apply to all hearings 333 pursuant to this section. All testimony at a hearing held pursuant to 334 this section shall be given under oath or affirmation.
  - Sec. 8. Section 45a-316 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective October 1, 2008*):
  - (a) Whenever, upon the application of a creditor or other person interested in the estate of a deceased person, it is found by the court of probate having jurisdiction of the estate that the granting of administration on the estate or the probating of the will of the deceased <u>person</u> will be delayed, or that it is necessary for the protection of the estate of the deceased <u>person</u>, the court may, with or without notice, appoint a temporary administrator to hold and preserve the estate until the appointment of an administrator or the probating of the will. The court shall require from such administrator a probate bond. If the court deems it more expedient, [it] <u>the court</u> may order any state marshal or constable to take possession of the estate until the appointment of an administrator or executor.
  - (b) Any person found by the court to have sufficient interest in the

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- 350 estate may apply to the court of probate for the appointment of a 351 temporary administrator for the limited purpose of obtaining financial or medical information concerning the deceased person, including, but 352 353 not limited to, medical information and records necessary for the 354 investigation of a potential cause of action of the estate, or a potential 355 cause of action of an heir, devisee, legatee or beneficiary of the 356 deceased person. The court may grant the application if the court finds 357 that such appointment would be in the interests of the estate or in the interests of an heir, devisee, legatee or beneficiary of the deceased 358 359 person. The court shall limit the authority of the temporary 360 administrator to disclose the information obtained by the temporary 361 administrator, as appropriate, and may issue an appropriate order for 362 the disclosure of such information. Any order appointing a temporary administrator under this subsection, and any certificate of the 363 appointment of a fiduciary issued by the clerk of the court, shall 364 indicate (1) the duration of the temporary administrator's 365 appointment, and (2) that such temporary administrator has no 366 authority over the assets of the deceased person. 367
- Sec. 9. Subsection (b) of section 45a-111 of the general statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):
- 371 (b) (1) No fees shall be charged under sections 45a-106 to 45a-112, 372 inclusive, or under section 45a-727 for adoption proceedings involving 373 special needs children.
- 374 (2) No entry fee shall be charged under section 45a-106 for an 375 application for a change of name requested because the applicant has 376 entered into a civil union.
- Sec. 10. (*Effective from passage*) Section 45a-189 of the general statutes is repealed.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	July 1, 2008	45a-107
Sec. 2	October 1, 2008	45a-36a
Sec. 3	<i>October 1, 2008</i>	45a-77
Sec. 4	<i>October 1, 2008</i>	45a-92(c)
Sec. 5	July 1, 2009	5-259(g)
Sec. 6	from passage	45a-186(b)
Sec. 7	from passage	45a-650(b)
Sec. 8	<i>October 1, 2008</i>	45a-316
Sec. 9	from passage	45a-111(b)
Sec. 10	from passage	Repealer section

JUD Joint Favorable Subst.

APP Joint Favorable